

Mr. Riley Darnell  
Secretary of State  
Tennessee State Capitol  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

January 15, 2005

RECEIVED  
2005 JAN 27 AM 8:16  
T.R.A. DOCKET ROOM

RE: 2004 Docket #'s, 04-00166 and 04-00211

Dear Sir:

The Tennessee Regulatory Authority Docket 04-00166 and 04-00211, if approved could allow higher rates for calls from inmates at Tennessee jails and prisons. I am urging you to support the children and families of prisoners and vote against any increases in costs and any possible decreases in the time length of calls from a state or local penal institution.

Families of Tennessee prisoners are the forgotten victims of crime. Innocent of any wrong doing, they too often suffer in silence. It is therefore very important that elected and appointed government officials protect our interests. Our families are primarily responsible for telephone and many other expenditures of out incarcerated loved ones. The proposed changes would result in drastic telephone rate increases that we cannot afford. We also cannot afford to stop improving our family relationships through regular 30 minute telephone calls. Healthy family bonds during imprisonment help to reduce repeated incarcerations and ultimately make our communities safer for all Tennessee families. To shorten the length of the calls would be devastating to family bonds. Affordable local and long distance calls are especially critical for families who are not physically or financially able to visit prisons that are often in remote locations where public transportation is not available and over night accommodations and meals would drive up the costs. I am also concerned that the current telephone provider, Global Tel-Link lacks accountability to its customers. We insist that improved customer service and better billing services are required of all telephone service providers to prisons and jails in Tennessee.

As a concerned citizen, I will be watching these issues very closely. I earnestly hope that you will support families of Tennessee's prisoners and not the interests of big business.

Sincerely,

Kate  
*Riley Darnell*  
*Josh Younce*

RECEIVED 6000 State Road #303552  
2005 JAN 27 AM 3: 19 Memphis TN 38134  
19 January 2005

T.R.A. DOCKET ROOM

Mr. Riley Darnell  
Secretary of State  
Tennessee State Capitol  
Nashville TN 37243

Dear Mr. Darnell,

It has come to my attention that the Tennessee Regulatory Authority Docket 04-00166 and 04-00211 could allow the raising of rates for inmate telephone calls in Tennessee. I would like to urge you to seriously consider the ramifications of this proposed increase. While certainly there are costs associated with having regulations and security on the telephone systems in the prisons and jails, those costs are already astronomical.

One thirty-minute long telephone conversation with anyone outside of Tennessee already costs a minimum of \$19.46. If the inmate cannot afford to pre-pay their out-of-state calls, the charges get even higher, frequently surpassing the \$30.00 mark for one thirty-minute conversation. Above and beyond that, people whose local service is provided by AT&T or its affiliates are frequently double-billed for collect calls made from the Global Tel-Link subsidiary of MCI/Worldcom. The same phone call from a regular pay telephone would cost less than a third as much, and the same phone call placed from a home phone line in today's society would either be around \$3.00 (after service charges and interstate taxes) or provided free.

In-state calls are hardly better. A thirty-minute call from Memphis to the outskirts of Nashville can run between \$5 and \$15, depending on the time of day and whether it is pre-paid or collect. For any inmate trying to stay in touch with their children, this can become a prohibitive amount, as families are already trying hard enough to support the children we should be supporting ourselves. Again, the same phone call made from any other source would be far less than the lowest costs we face.

We are already being punished simply by our incarceration. Our families and friends are being punished with the sideways glances they get, the inability to see us at any time, and the infrequency of our communication. Please do not continue to punish them to the point of having to give up telephone calls completely, due to higher rates.

Sincerely,



C. Arabel Wooster

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Sincerely,

*Eppie Beard*